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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Monday, October 29, 1934.

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Hello Folks.-

In a letter to Secretary Wallace which was referred to me a couple of days ago the writer suggests that a vigorous campaign be started to encourage farmers and home owners generally to beautify their home surroundings and to give more attention to their home gardens and fruit plantings. The writer of this letter, a Providence, Rhode Island gentleman, lays particular stress upon the value of farmstead home improvement as an asset in the sale of the products of the farm, especially when those sales are made through the medium of a roadside market. The point is well taken and the ideas expressed in this letter to the Secretary are sound throughout and an attractive home with nice shade trees, a neat lawn, shrubbery and flowers around the home and the buildings in good repair and neatly painted is a good endorsement of the character of the people who live in the home and the quality of anything they might offer for sale.

Doubtless some of you are saying that all of this is a big assignment for these times when money is scarce. Yes I agree with you and I doubt if many of us could undertake so extensive a program of home improvement all at once but we might undertake one thing at a time and eventually see our whole plan materialize. And that leads me to the thought that in order to carry out our improvement work effectively we will need a working plan and these long evenings that we are having at present is just the opportunity for all interested members of the family to gather around the table under the big lamp and work out a plan.

First, there is the matter of walks and drives. Do they require any changes of grade or location. Then there is the matter of shade trees and the planting of a few new ones. In planting shade trees it should be borne in mind that they should be so located that they will furnish shade where shade is needed and under most conditions the trees should form a sort of framework and background for the house with the view in front left clear. There are kinds of shade trees that are adapted to every location and purpose. Some of the oaks like the live oak of the south and the red oak and white oak of the north are spreading in their habit of growth. The elms are graceful and drooping in their habit of growth while the Lombardy poplar and Sycamore are tall and stately.

A nice velvety lawn is the second important element in our home improvement plan, and no matter how elaborate your plantings if you do not have a good lawn your whole plan will be more or less of a failure. In general the lawn should be kept open and clear of practically all plantings. It is the carpet of your outdoor home and your carpet should be clean and velvety green. It costs little to make a good lawn, especially on farms where compost is available for mixing with the soil as the lawn is being

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graded and laid down. The necessary labor and a few pounds of green seed are the main elements of expense.

Next in our plan comes the shrubbery plantings around the house foundations and in one or two borders at the sides or back of the lawn. Native evergreens and shrubs may often be brought from the fields and woods and planted around the home without one cent of actual money being expended. A few nursery grown shrubs will add materially to the effect if you can afford them but the native plants will answer fairly well.

So far we have considered the front portions of our plan, the part that is seen from the roadway by the thousands of motorists who are constantly passing our doors. We need to go much farther in our planning and include a flower garden where it can be seen from the kitchen and dining room. I remember the case of a woman whose kitchen had but one window and as she worked at her kitchen table her back was to the window with only a wall to gaze upon. Following a carefully considered plan a new kitchen was built with four windows and the sink and work table located directly under the windows. Now instead of looking at a blank wall this lady as she prepares her meals, looks directly out upon a beautiful flower garden with its roses, daffodils, poppies, larkspur, peonies, iris and a number of other flowers. Outside the three main windows there is a flower box which during the summer is filled with foliage and blooming plants and the flower garden itself is bordered with Japanese barberry and other attractive shrubs. Indoor work under these conditions is certainly made more pleasant where one can look out upon a beautiful garden with its ever changing colors.

And in making our plan let's not forget the vegetable garden and the strawberry bed and plantings of other small fruits that are adapted for growing in our locality. Today I am laying the foundation for a number or a series of garden calendar talks in which I propose to take up more or less in detail some of the points in the plan that I have mentioned today. In the meantime let me suggest that you secure a rather large sheet of paper and draw upon it a plan for your home and its surroundings as it exists today, then as we go along you can indicate the changes and improvements that are suggested in the talks. Let's be guided by the suggestions made by the gentleman whose letter I referred to and make this a home improvement year.

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